

FAA Background Information Regarding U.S. Civil Aviation – Mali

Due to ongoing fighting involving military forces and extremist/militant groups and an unstable security situation in Mali, the FAA assesses that there is a potential risk to U.S. civil aviation operating into, out of, within, or over the territory and airspace of Mali at altitudes below FL260. As a result, on 26 February 2017, the FAA published Notice to Airmen KICZ A0004/17, advising U.S. civil aviation to avoid flight operations into, out of, within or over the territory and airspace of Mali at altitudes below FL260.

International civil air routes that transit Mali's airspace and aircraft operating to and from Malian airports, particularly in the area north of Mopti, are at risk from small arms; indirect fire weapons, such as mortars and rockets; and anti-aircraft capable weapons, including man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS). Such weapons could target aircraft at low altitudes, including during the arrival and departure phases of flight, and/or airports and aircraft on the ground. Some extremist/militant groups in Mali are suspected to possess or have access to MANPADS, which may have originated from the conflict in Libya. Some MANPADS have the capability to reach a maximum altitude of 25,000 feet. Attacks against aircraft in flight and/or Malian airports may occur with little or no warning.

Militant groups have demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct both direct and indirect fire attacks on Malian airports, particularly in northern Mali, targeting airports and/or adjacent military camps. In late-November 2016 and again in mid-January 2017, extremists conducted vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attacks against or in proximity to the Gao Airport (GAGO) and rocket attacks targeting Timbuktu Airport (GATB). In mid-February 2016, the United Nations base in Kidal was attacked by rockets, small arms fire and a truck bomb driven by a suicide operative that killed seven people and wounded 30 others.

Southern Mali has also experienced violence, but at lesser levels. In November 2015, transnational terrorists affiliated with al-Qa'ida attacked the Radisson hotel in Bamako; the attack resulted in 20 people killed. Among the dead were six crew members of a non-U.S. operator.

The FAA will continue to review the situation regarding threats to U.S. civil aviation operating in the territory and airspace of Mali and make adjustments to its advisory for U.S. civil aviation as necessary.

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